

ACTION ITEM

Appointment of Delta Lead Scientist

Summary: Review the recommendation from the Delta Independent Science Board (Delta ISB) and vote on the appointment of Dr. John Callaway as Lead Scientist for the Delta Science Program.

Requested Action

The Delta ISB, at its July 13-14 meeting, recommended that the Council appoint Dr. Callaway as the Lead Scientist for the Delta Science Program. Water Code section 85280(b) requires that the Council appoint a Lead Scientist after consultation with the Delta ISB. The Delta ISB requests that the Council appoint Dr. Callaway as Lead Scientist for the Delta Science Program.

Background

The Delta ISB recommends that the Council appoint Dr. John Callaway as Lead Scientist for the Delta Science Program (Attachment 1). The term of the current Lead Scientist, Dr. Cliff Dahm, concludes at the end of August 2017. Today's appointment would provide a transition period of one month.

Nominee

Dr. Callaway is a professor in the Department of Environmental Science at the University of San Francisco (USF), where he also directs the Master's program in Environmental Management. He has taught courses in wetland ecology and restoration ecology at USF and conducted research on wetland restoration, climate change effects on tidal wetlands, and wetland carbon dynamics. His research expertise is in wetland restoration, specifically wetland plant ecology and sediment dynamics.

Recent research projects focused on the development of restored wetlands, including evaluations of the importance of plant species diversity and the role of physical heterogeneity in the development of ecosystem functions. His research has included projects in San Francisco Bay and Tijuana Estuary. In 2013, he was awarded USF's Distinguished Research Award. Dr. Callaway has served on a number of advisory panels on wetland restoration and management, including in Louisiana, Southern California, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Dr. Callaway received a B.S. in Biology from the University of California, Berkeley; a M.S. in Biology from San Francisco State University; and a Ph.D. in Oceanography and Coastal Sciences from Louisiana State University. Prior to his position at USF, Dr. Callaway was the Associate Director of the Pacific Estuarine Research Laboratory (PERL) at San Diego State University.

Dr. Callaway's expertise in wetland restoration, specifically wetland plant ecology and sediment dynamics, is related to many of the challenges facing the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. His recent research projects focus on the development of restored wetlands, including evaluations of the importance of plant species diversity and the role of physical heterogeneity in the development of ecosystem functions.

Recruitment and Interview Process

The Lead Scientist recruitment process included direct recruitment by the Delta ISB members, the Delta Lead Scientist, and members of the scientific community. Recruitment efforts targeted candidates that met qualifications defined in Water Code section 85280(b)(1):

- (A) Hold an advanced degree in a field related to water or ecosystem management.
- (B) Have a strong record of scientific research and publication in peer-reviewed scientific journals in a field related to water or ecosystem management.
- (C) Have experience advising high-level managers in science-based decision-making in the areas of water management and ecosystem restoration.
- (D) Have the capability to guide the application of an adaptive management process to resource management policy decisions in the Delta.

Members of the Delta ISB and key science and policy leaders from Delta agencies and stakeholder organizations served as an interview panel. Three candidates were interviewed, and two were selected for follow-up discussions. The recruitment efforts concluded in the identification of Dr. Callaway as a qualified candidate. The Delta ISB formally announced its recommendation at its July 2017 meeting. If appointed by the Council, Dr. Callaway would be hired directly through the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in July or August 2017 and serve a term of two years with an option to extend for up to two additional years.

Fiscal Information

Funding for the Lead Scientist is provided by the USGS as the federal partner of the Delta Science Program. The Lead Scientist is a USGS employee.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1: Letter of Recommendation from the Delta ISB
Attachment 2: Dr. John Callaway's Curriculum Vitae

Contact

Dr. Jay Lund, Past Chair
Delta Independent Science Board

Phone: (916) 445-5511